

II.5. NORTH TEXAS HIGHWAY (SH 5) – US 82/US 87/US 287/US 385

INTRODUCTION

Among the six named highways that are the subject of this study, the North Texas Highway is the only one that generally follows a single geographic feature: the Red River. The others parallel segments of other existing transportation routes (railroads, trails, or roads) that largely cut entirely new paths to support commerce and trade in areas of the state experiencing rapid growth and development. While multiple geographic and topographic features affected the paths of these other routes, none were as directly linked or closely followed just one such feature. The North Texas Highway has a northwest/southeast orientation and mostly extends along the south (Texas) side of the Red River. Near Childress, it crosses the river and continues to Amarillo, where it deviates from the river's path and takes a more northwesterly route toward Dalhart and Texline at the New Mexico border. The existence of such a route along the waterway obviously predates the automobile era, because the river would have been a physical feature that would have impeded north-south travel. The establishment of towns at strategic river crossings would have developed first, but, over time, railroads and roads developed to connect these communities.

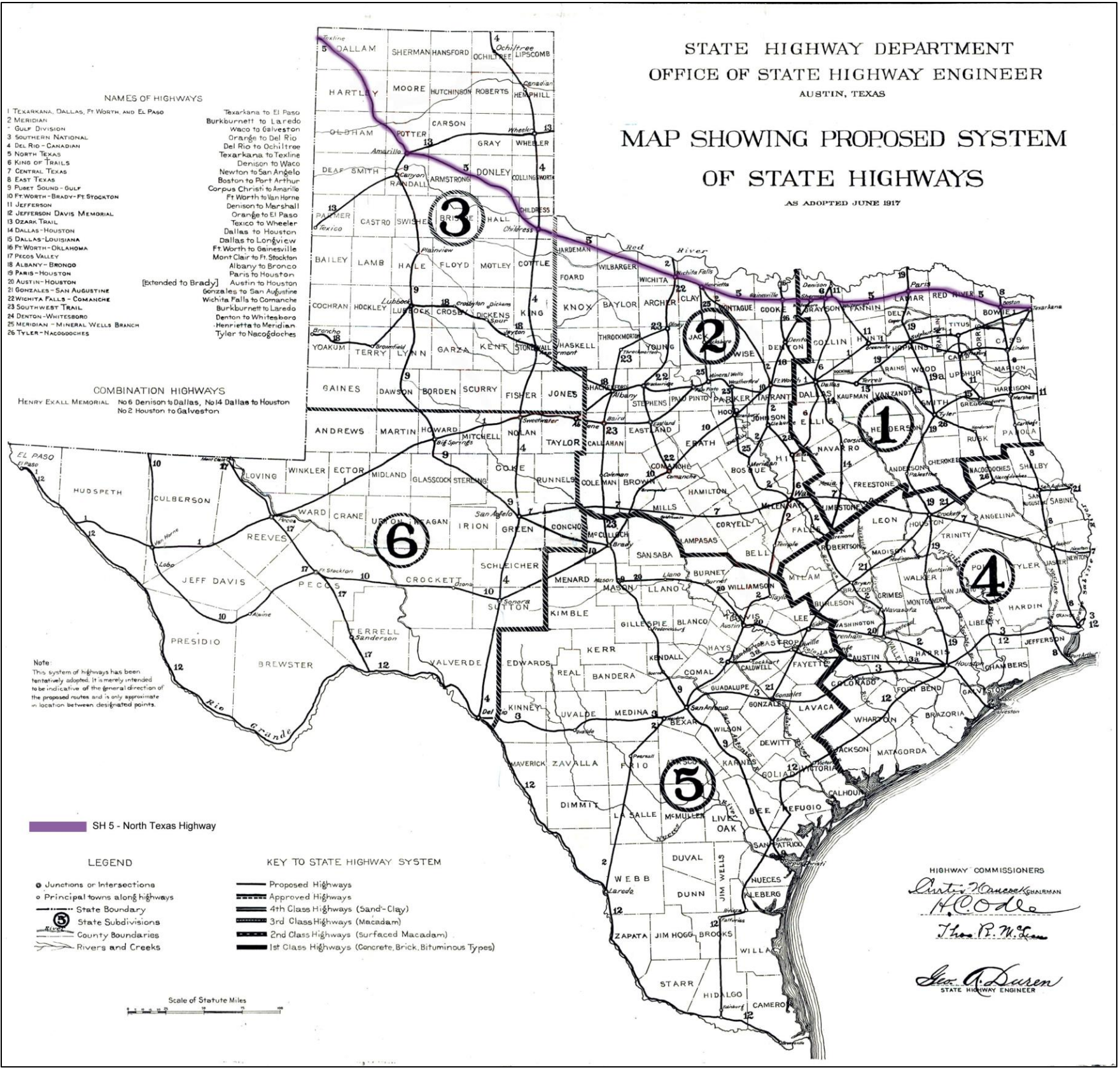
The Texas Highway Commission designated the North Texas Highway as SH 5 at the June 1917 meeting in Mineral Wells that announced the creation of the state highway system. (See *Figure 208*.) Meeting minutes note that the Highway Commission referred to it as the North Texas Highway; however, no affiliated highway association is known to have existed using that name at the time. Its designation as SH 5 revealed it to be among the most important in the state, and it functioned as the northernmost of the three east-west highways that stretched across the entire state. Following the adoption of the AASHO highway numbering plan in 1926, the Texas State Highway Commission added new highway designation layers to the roadway. The segment from Texarkana to Henrietta was designated exclusively US 82; however US 370 shared the same roadway until Wichita Falls where US 82 took a more southwesterly route. The North Texas Highway continued along US 370 (later renamed as US 287) to Amarillo, but it continued northwest to Texline as US 87. As with some of the other named highways, the North Texas Highway was not included in the interstate highway system; however, many segments have been widened and improved, and it remains an important part of the state's highway network.

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Figure 208. Edited version of the "Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways," 1917, highlighting the route of the North Texas Highway/SH 5. Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/cgibin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=6254> (accessed February 21, 2014).



EARLY ROADS AND TRAILS: 1680–1880

Historic Context

Segments of what became the North Texas Highway developed by the late Spanish Colonial period when, in 1787, José Mares, with the aid of a Comanche guide, explored a path between the vicinity of Quanah and the Wichita Falls area. This portion of his route appears to have extended along part of, or within a few miles of, the North Texas Highway. Local roads along the south side of the Red River that began to develop during Republic-era settlement of North Texas may have contributed road segments to the North Texas Highway. The portion of the 1844 Central National Road of the Republic of Texas between Sherman and Gainesville reportedly was incorporated into another portion of the North Texas Highway,¹⁰¹⁹ and is now part of US 82. Early cattle trails in West Texas included the Dodge City Trail, also called the Western Trail or the Tascosa Trail, and a section beginning 47 miles northwest of Amarillo and continuing to Dalhart became part of the North Texas Highway.

Development Patterns

The route running parallel to the Red River was used by stagecoach lines as early as the 1830s, when the towns of Sherman and Gainesville developed as early stagecoach stops.¹⁰²⁰ By 1858, *Colton's New Map of the State of Texas* depicted a number of settlements in the area along the future alignment of the North Texas Highway, including New Boston (labeled as "Boston"), DeKalb, Clarksville, Paris, Honey Grove, Sherman, and Gainesville.¹⁰²¹ Maps, however, did not depict a transportation route linking these settlements until 1874. At that time, the "Trans'l Paris" railroad connected Texarkana to Clarksville, Paris, Bonham, and Sherman. Traveling further west, the Sherman Wichita Pan Handle Railroad was completed from Sherman to Gainesville, but Gainesville marked the end of the line.¹⁰²²

COUNTY ROADS AND THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT: 1880–1916

Historic Context

From 1880 to 1916, the area along the future route of the North Texas Highway grew vigorously, thanks to construction of a railroad network that linked Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico, with proximity to major urban centers such as Texarkana, Paris, Sherman, Dallas, Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, and Amarillo. In the mid- to late 1880s, the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad was built through Vernon, Wichita Falls, and Henrietta to Decatur and Fort Worth.¹⁰²³ The Fort Worth and Denver Railroad also was built across the Panhandle and on the south side of the Red River and into Fort Worth. The section of that line from Dalhart

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Figure 209. Photograph of a road construction crew in Bluegrove, Clay County, ca. 1905. Advances in road building completed in subsequent years changed the physical character of roads, which became better suited to accommodate increased automobile traffic. Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth16523/> (accessed April 8, 2014), crediting the Clay County Historical Society.



to the vicinity of Wichita Falls roughly parallels the North Texas Highway.

A generally strong economy due to ranching, farming, and development of large oil fields resulted in prosperity on a county level, greater support for the Good Roads movement, and a willingness to vote for road bonds. Paris and Texarkana, for example, were the locations of early Object Lesson Road projects, and officials in Wichita Falls corresponded with the Office of Public Roads about their interest in road improvements following a favorable bond election. The exact locations of these road building experiments/demonstrations has not been determined through research, and their fate is not known.

Physical Evolution

Likely impassable during wet weather and winter months, the road was probably constructed of earth, sand-clay, gravel, or a combination of materials (*Figure 209*). The Bureau of Public Road engineers noted that roadways in Wichita Falls in the 1910s were bituminous macadam, and sand-clay was found on Paris roadways.¹⁰²⁴

Development Patterns

By 1893, railroad lines had been constructed along much of the route that would become the North Texas Highway. The segment from Sherman to Whitesboro was part of the Texas and Pacific Railway. The MK&T connected Whitesboro to Henrietta. Moving west, Henrietta was connected to Wichita Falls, Vernon, Quanah, Memphis, Clarendon, Claude, Amarillo, Tacos, and Texline by the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway. A number of new towns emerged along the route during this era, especially in the Panhandle.¹⁰²⁵ The Fort Worth and Denver City Railway company played a pivotal role in promoting the growth of farming along its line by developing model farms to showcase the land's potential for settlers. These farms were the first to introduce cotton to the Panhandle region (see *Figure 210*), and they also advocated growing winter wheat as cattle feed. The railroad company provided loans and

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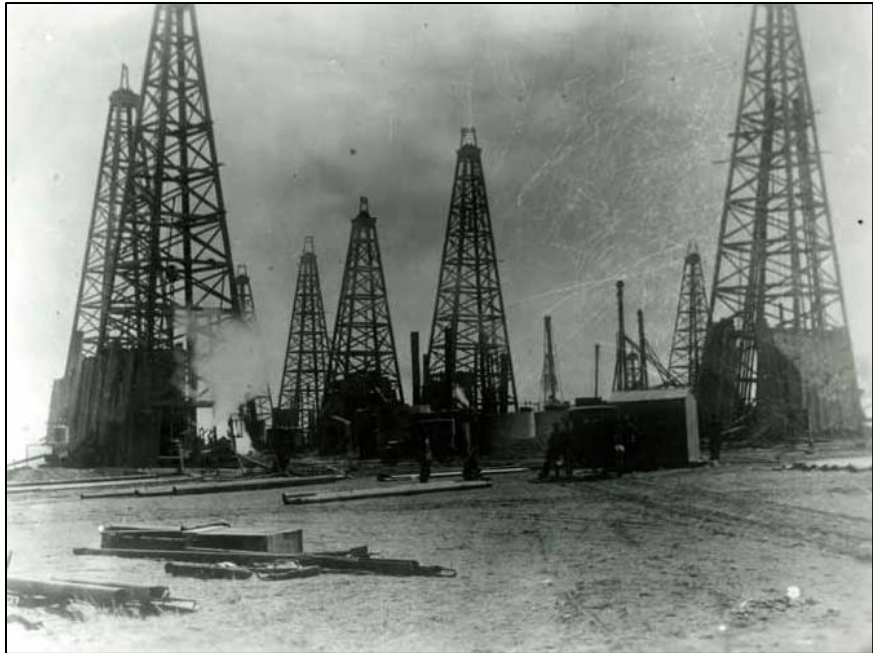
Figure 210. Photograph showing shipments of cotton traveling from the gin to the railroad, Petrolia, Clay County [dated 1935 (sic)]. A good road network was vital for agriculturalists to take goods and livestock to railroads and new market centers. Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth17059/> (accessed April 8, 2014), crediting the Clay County Historical Society.



financial incentives that supported growth and development, and a number of speculative land developers along the line also held interest in the railroad.¹⁰²⁶ The town of Wichita Falls, for example, was founded immediately after the arrival of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway in 1883, and soon thereafter included a mill and lumber yard.¹⁰²⁷ Amarillo also was founded immediately after the rail line arrived in 1887, and the town quickly grew as a center for stock yards holding livestock to be transported via the railroad.¹⁰²⁸

In 1911, oil was discovered at the Electra Oilfield, just west of Wichita Falls along the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway line. (See *Figure 211*.) The town of Electra grew from approximately 1,000 residents to approximately 5,000 in a matter of months.¹⁰²⁹ The oil boom trickled down to nearby towns such as Wichita Falls, which also experienced population increases. Sanborn maps show that oil supply yards and refineries quickly emerged along the railroad line to service the Electra Oilfield, as did lumber yards to supply the construction industry needed to house the quickly growing population. Sanborn maps also show auto repair shops and auto garages. Automobiles and trucks were indispensable for the business of oil production, because the locations of oil wells were remote and constantly changing, unlike previous industries, which were stable and could be constructed within reach of the railroad.

Figure 211. Photo of the Electra Oilfield, ca. 1911. Source: Photographs of Electra, Texas, Texas Tech University Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, <http://collections.swco.ttu.edu/handle/10605/2081> (accessed May 2, 2013).



INITIATION OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1917–1932

Historic Context

The North Texas Highway does not appear to have been promoted by any particular Good Roads association at the time of its designation as one of the 25 roads within the Texas highway system. Nonetheless, the Highway Department Commissioners designated its route as starting in Texarkana and trending westward on the south side of the Red River to Paris, Sherman, Gainesville, Wichita Falls, Childress, Amarillo, and Texline.¹⁰³⁰ (Refer to *Figures 35* and *53* in previous Section I.4.) Despite the apparent lack of representation by an association, SH 5 consistently received considerable amounts of both state and federal aid between 1917 and 1932,¹⁰³¹ frequently for projects that were costly and resulted in a large proportion of concrete highway construction.

In 1921, the Texas Highway Commission designated SH 5 as part of the Major State Highway System and described its route as Texarkana to New Boston, De Kalb, Avery, Clarksville, Detroit, Paris, Brookston, Bonham, Sherman, Gainesville, Ringgold, and Henrietta, where it joined SH 2 (the Meridian Highway) to travel to Wichita Falls. At Wichita Falls, it presumably became the North Texas Highway again and went to Electra, Vernon, Chillicothe, Quanah, Childress, Memphis, Clarendon, Goodnight, Claude, Amarillo, Channing, Hartley, Dalhart, and Texline.¹⁰³²

With affirmation of the value of the road, counties aggressively undertook bond elections and road construction. In 1922, for example, Lamar County voters approved a \$1.5 million bond for construction of

hard surfaced roads; the county received an additional \$525,000 in state and federal aid, leading county commissioners to plan for 125 miles of roads with a standard grade width of 24 feet. All bridges and drainage structures were to be reinforced concrete. The total included plans for 25 miles of 16-foot-wide concrete surfacing on the two principal highways through the county, and gravel construction for the balance. Such improved roads no doubt would be attractive to tourists, who would find a new free auto tourist park in Paris. The park had a camphouse with concrete floors, a screened-in gallery, gas stoves, shower baths, lavatories, and laundry tubs, all on several acres.¹⁰³³

Bonds also paid for plans in Fannin County for an 18-foot-wide concrete highway beginning at the Lamar County line. Other improvements along the course of SH 5 in 1923 to 1924 included a project in Bowie County, where a Wichita County contractor was hired to build a segment of concrete road. In Grayson, Fannin, and Lamar counties, “extensive improvements” were planned; and in Wilbarger County to the west, plans were drawn for the construction of an 18-foot-wide concrete portion of SH 5 going west from the Wichita County line. Concrete pavement had been completed along 17 miles west of Vernon in Wilbarger County, with only a quarter-mile exception.¹⁰³⁴

In November 1924, the Texas Highway Commission included SH 5 in its list of primary roads of the Federal Aid Highway System. The Commission described the route as leading from the Texas–Arkansas state line at Texarkana to New Boston, Clarksville, Paris, Bonham, Sherman, Gainesville, Ringgold, Henrietta, Wichita Falls, Vernon, Quanah, Childress, Memphis, Goodnight, Amarillo, Channing, Dalhart, and Texline.¹⁰³⁵ Parts of the road continued relatively unimproved, such as roadway near Henrietta, where the dirt road was described as “rough.” Other stretches to the east through Grayson County and parts of Fannin County were reasonably good gravel roads.¹⁰³⁶

Beginning around 1926, there were numerous projects to resurface SH 5. By 1927, the entire highway from Texarkana to Bonham was surfaced, and tourists were being directed to take the SH 5 route from Texarkana to the Dallas area. Seeing success within their grasp, representatives from towns between Texarkana and Wichita Falls organized the Highway No. 5 Association for the purpose of urging completion of the highway. The organization took the initiative, targeting Montague County for road projects. They also worked to secure federal designation for the highway in 1931.¹⁰³⁷

Some amount of the work on SH 5 between the mid-1920s and the early 1930s involved relocation of the earlier route as the Texas Highway Department sought to shorten distances between towns. Sometimes county delegations disagreed with the re-routings. In Montague County, for example, representatives protested a change that would cut off

several communities. The Texas Highway Commission and State Engineer, on the other hand, held that it was beneficial to eliminate multiple grade crossings and shorten the distance of the highway through the county. In other cases, local residents saw the good aspects of new roads that supplanted older routes and ways of traveling. The small crossroads community of Reno east of Paris was on the Texas and Pacific Railway and, until the early to mid-1920s, never had a population of more than 150. Construction of a concrete highway (the North Texas) one-half mile north of the community resulted in relocation of its two stores and a church adjacent to the highway, and the construction of two new business houses, four filling stations, and a dance pavilion and swimming pool.¹⁰³⁸

Equally impressive were the new highway-related examples of infrastructure such as overpasses across the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway north of Vernon, a concrete bridge over the Pease River, and two bridges over the Red River in Hall and Bowie counties. The Bowie County bridge, located a short distance northeast of Texarkana, was on the Bankhead Highway. Its scale (it was a 1,907-foot-long reinforced concrete structure) was sufficiently large to facilitate travel along the SH 5 route up the Red River Valley and along SH 8 on its route south to Orange and Beaumont.¹⁰³⁹

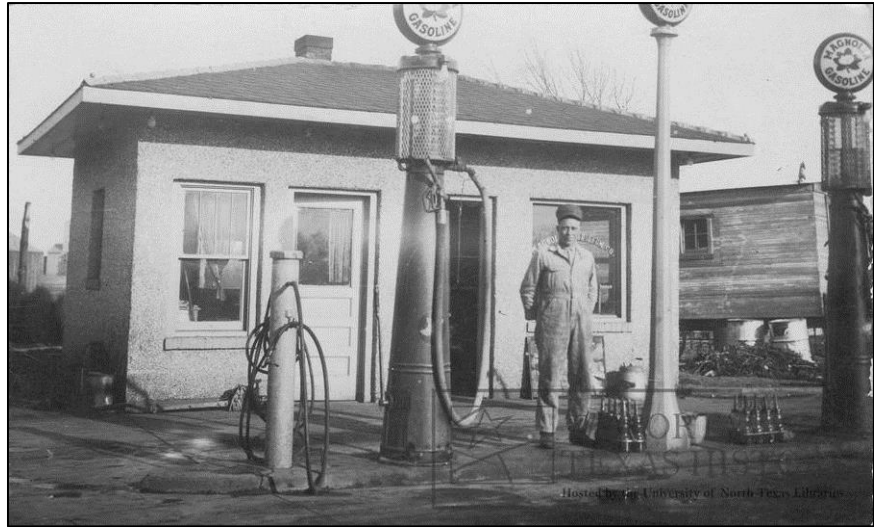
Physical Evolution

As with some of the other named highways included in this study, little information on the physical character of the North Texas Highway was found. As a result, it is assumed that much of the North Texas Highway had improved smooth surfaced roads in and near cities, such as Texarkana, Wichita Falls, Childress, and Amarillo. In rural areas, the highway was likely constructed with gravel and sand-clay.

Development Patterns

The North Texas Highway was planned as early as 1917, when it appeared on the Texas Highway Department's map of the proposed highway system.¹⁰⁴⁰ By 1925, the route was featured on a map entitled *The National Park to Park Highway System*, noting Palo Duro Canyon Park near Amarillo.¹⁰⁴¹ At the time, the Palo Duro Canyon was maintained by local civic organizations, and efforts were underway to designate it as a state or national park, but no official designation had been received.¹⁰⁴² As late as 1928, though, the majority of the highway remained unpaved, especially in the Texas Panhandle. Where paving did occur, it primarily linked larger cities—such as Wichita Falls—to other paved highways that extended to Fort Worth and Dallas.¹⁰⁴³ These paved sections also provided transportation to and from the oil fields at Burkburnett, near Wichita Falls, which had boomed in 1918.¹⁰⁴⁴ For travel across the full width of North Texas and through the Texas

Figure 212. Photograph of a gas station in Clay County, ca. 1930. The proliferation of gas stations became a common sight along the North Texas and other highways. This is an example of an independent gas station operator from about 1930. Other gas stations from the period were of standard forms and promoted company-specific branding developed by large oil companies in the region, such as Magnolia Sinclair and Texaco. Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph16834/> (accessed April 8, 2014), crediting the Clay County Historical Society.



Panhandle, the railroad remained the primary means of transportation. Although the highway was paved immediately around Amarillo, these short paved stretches probably were used by farmers in the outlying areas driving into Amarillo or driving to the railroad junction rather than by long-distance travelers (*Figure 212*).

DEPRESSION, MOBILIZATION, AND WAR: 1933–1944

Historic Context

The availability of monies from federal-aid programs funded construction and maintenance on SH 5 during the 1930s and 1940s. While few changes were made to the alignment of the route, its designation with several U.S. highway routes changed. In 1934, the state highway map shows that SH 5 shared mileage with two U.S. highways – US 87 from Texline to Amarillo, and US 370 from Amarillo to Henrietta.

The Highway No. 5 Association eventually won its fight to have other parts of SH 5 designated as a federal highway. In 1934, the Paris City Council passed a resolution supporting efforts to have the portion of the highway renamed U.S. Highway No. 82.¹⁰⁴⁵ US 82 was used interchangeably with US 370 from Henrietta eastward. When a 12-mile asphalt section was completed in Cooke and Montague counties in 1938, SH 5 became “an unbroken stretch of hard-surfaced road from Texarkana to Texline.”¹⁰⁴⁶ Analysis of the 1936 Texas Highway Department Centennial Map and the 1940 Red River County General Highway Map shows that US 82/SH 5 was realigned to bypass the community of English between the two dates. (Refer to *Figure 78* in previous Section I.5.) The abandoned mileage was re-designated as FM 114 in 1944.¹⁰⁴⁷ By 1939, the Texas Highway Commission designated US 87 along the route from north of Amarillo to Henrietta. (See *Figure 213*.)



Figure 213. Photograph of the highway north of Amarillo, Randall County, taken by Dorthea Lange in 1939. This segment passes through the southern end of the Great Plains, which produced large yields of wheat before the Dust Bowl. The North Texas Highway was used to transport cattle and wheat to regional market centers. Source: Dorthea Lange, "Great Plains and highway north of Amarillo, Texas," Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection, Black-and-White Negatives, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/item/fsa2000004593/PP/> (accessed April 8, 2014).

From Henrietta, westward, the route retained the US 82 designation. At this time, SH 5 was shortened to a starting point north of Amarillo to Hartley. SH 5 was canceled and removed with the Highway Commission's approval of Minute Order No. 20819 on September 14, 1944. At the same meeting, the east–west segment of the highway at Channing (Dallam County) was designated as SH 354.¹⁰⁴⁸

Physical Evolution

Completed construction projects along the North Texas Highway included general upgrade of pavements, roadway widths, and installation of grade-separation structures over railroad lines. For example, the improvement of roadway surface in Red River County replaced the old asphalt surface with new asphalt surface on a wider roadway.¹⁰⁴⁹ Similarly, the 13.5-mile project in Montague County consisted of new drainage structures and reconstructed roadway.¹⁰⁵⁰ (See *Figures 214 and 215.*) Examples of new grade-separation structures over railroad lines were also constructed during this time period on the eastern edge of Wichita Falls.

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Figure 214. Site plan showing US 82 in Ringgold, Montague County, 1935. This roadway project typified a common trend of the era in which a new alignment bypassed a city and proceeded along a more direct path. The re-routing of the highway improved safety and enabled vehicles to travel at higher speeds. This project also involved the elimination of a railroad crossing, another safety concern of the era and a frequent type of public works project undertaken during the Great Depression. Source: "Plans of the Proposed Highway Improvement: Montague County from Clay County Line to Ringgold," Records Management, Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas.

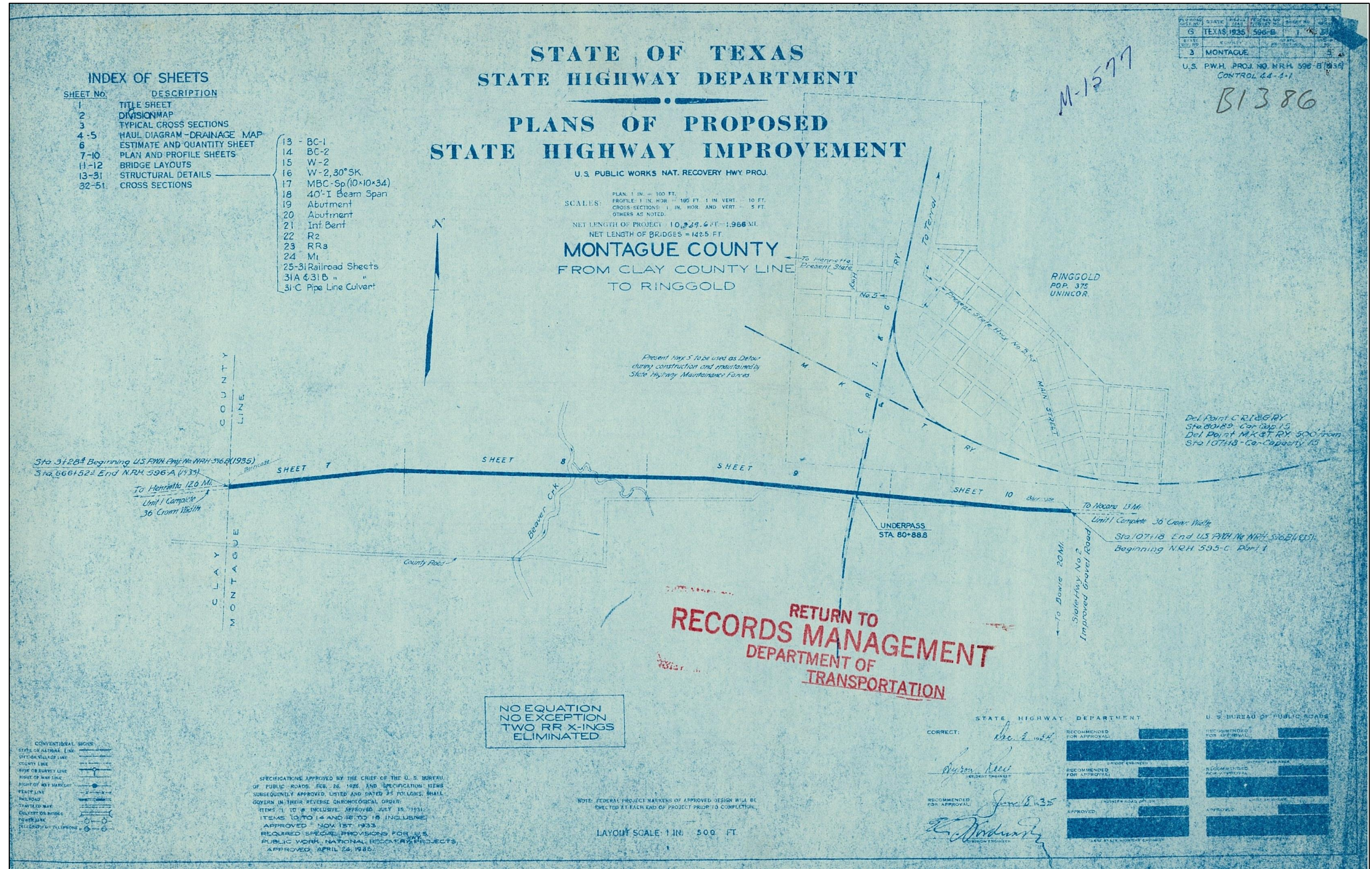
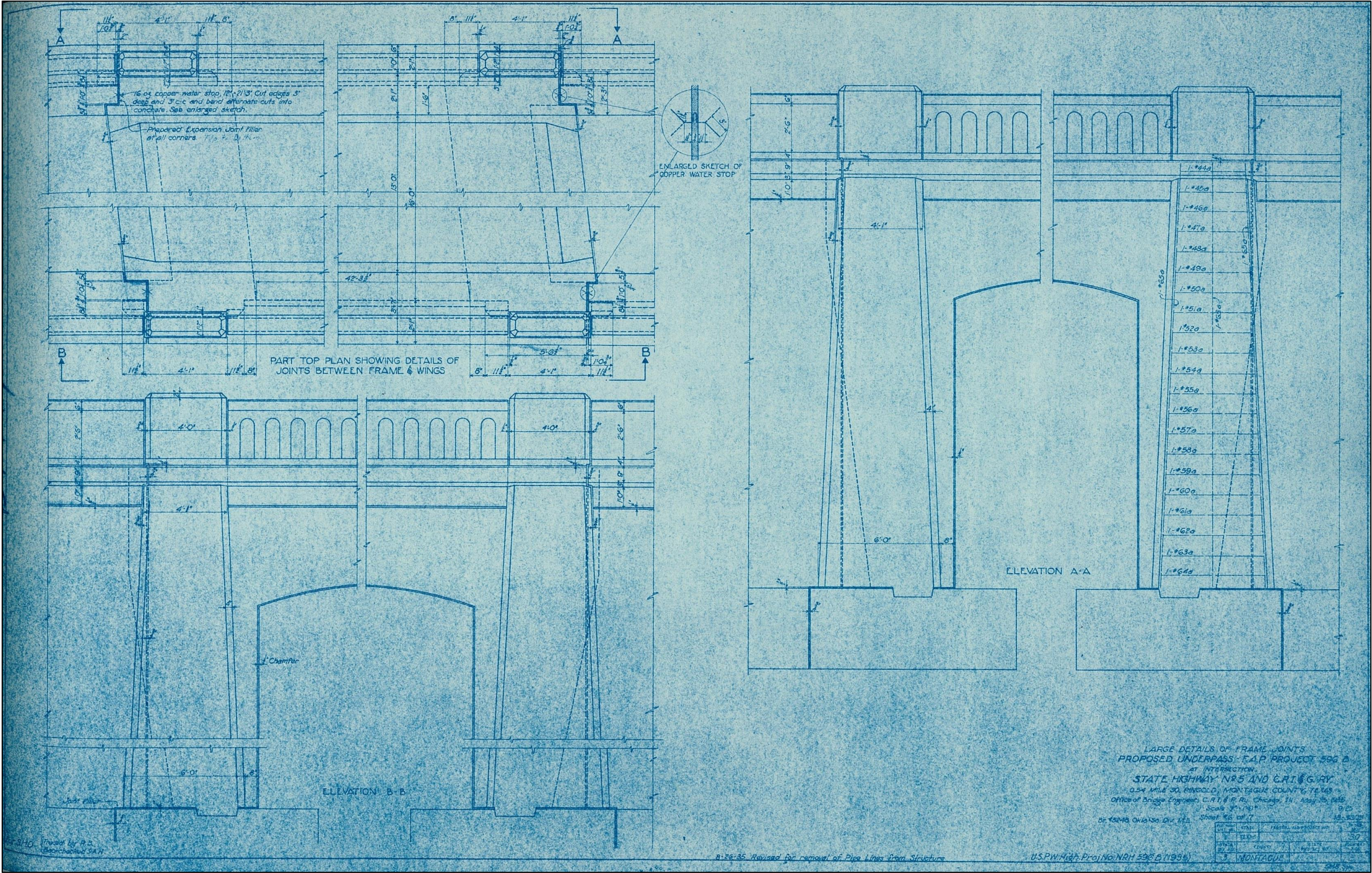


Figure 215. Drawings of the grade separation structure at the intersection of the new alignment of SH 82 and the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railway tracks, Ringgold, Montague County, 1935. One of the Texas Highway Department's highest safety priorities of the 1930s was the elimination of railroad crossings. This structure was built a few miles west of the intersection of the North Texas Highway and the Meridian Highway. This bridge was noteworthy because of its Art Deco-influenced stylistic features. Source: "Plans of the Proposed Highway Improvement: Montague County from Clay County Line to Ringgold," Records Management, Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas.



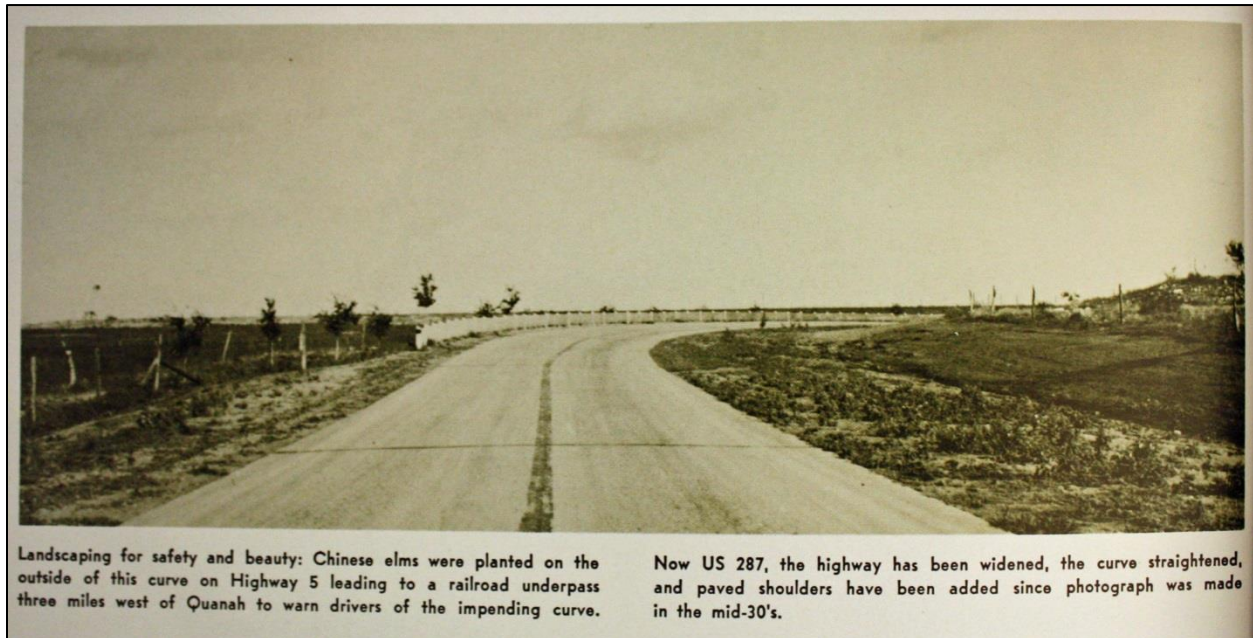


Figure 216. Photo of SH 5 in the mid-1930s. Source: *Texas Highways*, September 1967, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition, Texas A&M University, Cushing Library, Good Roads Association Papers, Box 6, Folder 5.

Development Patterns

In the period from 1933 to 1944, the economy along the North Texas Highway was generally defined by lumber, dairies, and poultry in eastern portion of state, and large-scale ranches and oil development further west.¹⁰⁵¹ The Panhandle was especially hard-hit by the Depression, though, and drought conditions crippled agriculture in the area, driving many farmers to migrate west. At the same time, the landscape in the Panhandle was targeted for park development in the 1930s (*Figure 216*). In 1933, the Palo Duro Canyon lands were conveyed to the Texas State Parks Board.¹⁰⁵² (See *Figure 217*.) Again, the presence of the highway nearby was an important factor in the State Parks Board's decision-making process. In the park, the CCC constructed infrastructure and tourist facilities. In the early 1940s, military expansion along the route included the establishment of Sheppard Air Field in Wichita Falls in 1941.¹⁰⁵³ The Amarillo Army Air Field opened in 1940, and the Pantex Ordnance Plant opened nearby in 1942.¹⁰⁵⁴

POSTWAR ROAD EXPANSION: 1945–1956

Historic Context

The route of old North Texas Highway saw several changes during the postwar period. Most Texas Highway Department activity on the road occurred in the form of maintenance and minor alignment alterations, as opposed to the major construction and upgrades that occurred on other named highways. In the late 1940s, the route was altered westward outside of Paris to follow a more straight, southwesterly path,

Figure 217. Photograph of a stone cabin within the new Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Randall County, ca. 1935. Note the design of the cabin using rubble masonry and a flat roof to reflect the natural appearance of the surrounding canyon and plateaus. Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife Archives, <http://texascpparks.org/archive/#/h/parks/palo-duro> (accessed April 8, 2014).



and was updated to standards consistent with the Department's efforts to develop expressways statewide.¹⁰⁵⁵ The project involved increasing the right-of-way from 100 to 120 feet.¹⁰⁵⁶ Within the Paris city limits, the right-of-way was expanded from 60 to 80 feet wide.¹⁰⁵⁷ Preliminary work began in February 1946; a portion of the new alignment was opened by July 23, 1947.¹⁰⁵⁸ The abandoned portions of the original route were re-designated as FM 38, FM 1509, and FM 1510.¹⁰⁵⁹ Additional work on US 82 in northeast Texas resulted in the new alignments of the highway bypassing several communities. For example, the *Dallas Morning News* reported in January 1950 that 6.4 miles of grading structures and a railroad underpass were being built between Blossom and Detroit.¹⁰⁶⁰ This work was on a new stretch of highway being built between the two cities in Red River and Lamar counties. The original, more southerly alignment was renamed FM 194 in 1952.¹⁰⁶¹

Most of the improvements on the sections of old SH 5 occurred on US 82 east of Gainesville, which created some tension for those communities farther west. In March 1956, Texas Highway Commissioner Marshall Formby spoke before members of the Highway 287 Association representing the counties between Henrietta and Dumas.¹⁰⁶² He informed them that the eastern stretch of US 287 between Henrietta and Vernon received more construction monies than the western part of the highway because areas to the east handled a higher volume of traffic. He also announced that five contracts amounting to \$2 million were in progress in the eastern area, and that another \$9 million in work had been approved for the 1955–1956 program. He offered some hope to attendees from western parts of the state, however, by informing the association members that the entire route through Texas might eventually be transformed to a four-lane highway if the traffic count increased.¹⁰⁶³

Physical Evolution

Like the Del Rio–Canadian Highway, the North Texas Highway route (which was subsumed by US 82) probably was not a major focus of the Texas Highway Department during the 1944 to 1955 period. While the route went through Wichita Falls and Amarillo, both of which were home to military air fields, the majority of the highway improvements on US 82/US 370 were likely at the intersection with US 81 (Meridian Highway) in Montague County near the Oklahoma border. If upgrades of the former North Texas Highway occurred, they likely included the construction of controlled-access thoroughfares outside the city centers.

Development Patterns

Along the North Texas Highway, most small towns and rural areas experienced little growth. The growth that did occur along the route was clustered in urban areas like Amarillo and Wichita Falls. In these cities, the military expansion that began prior to the war continued throughout the war and beyond. Both Sheppard Army Air Field in Wichita Falls and the Amarillo Army Air Field closed temporarily, but both were reactivated as Air Force bases in the early 1950s for the Korean War.¹⁰⁶⁴ In these cities, the developmental patterns generally followed those in larger cities, but at a smaller scale.

EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1957–1980

Physical Evolution

The North Texas Highway was incorporated into the newly designated US 82 between Texarkana and Wichita Falls. From Wichita Falls, the road became US 287 (also designated in 1939) to Amarillo. The roadway was likely a two-lane undivided roadway in the 1950s, and much of this alignment was widened to a four-lane undivided roadway paved with an asphalt surface sometime before 1980. Like some of the other named highways from the early years of the Texas Highway Department, the North Texas Highway was not integrated into the Interstate Highway System and was subject to far fewer upgrades, widening, and other improvements.

Development Patterns

Following the trend toward urbanization seen across Texas, the larger cities along the North Texas Highway experienced significant growth, while smaller towns grew more modestly or declined. In Wichita Falls, the city government made a concerted effort to attract new industries to compensate for declining oil production in the 1960s. As a result, companies such as Sprague Electric, Johnson and Johnson, and Dow Chemical all located in Wichita Falls in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁶⁵ In

Amarillo, new industries in the 1970s included copper refining and an Owens-Corning fiberglass plant, as well as beef processing.¹⁰⁶⁶ USGS topographic maps show that, in both Wichita Falls and Amarillo, new industrial properties were located at the periphery of town along the North Texas Highway, especially near locations where the railroad intersected the highway. The opening of a new beef processing plant in Amarillo coincided with a significant increase in cattle grazing across the Texas Panhandle, due in part to the increased availability of irrigation in the region.¹⁰⁶⁷ The old route of the highway was subject to varying degrees of redevelopment pressures depending on unique circumstances and situations in the communities along its path. In rural areas, the highway still served area farmers and ranchers who relied on the roadway to get their goods to market. Tourism diminished as most travelers used interstate highways, which allowed higher speeds and fewer stops.

CONCLUSION

The North Texas Highway is a major east–west highway that was designated by the Texas Highway Commission in 1917. Roughly paralleling the Red River, the highway stretches approximately 600 miles and extends from a point near the state’s northeast corner (Texarkana) to the town of Texline near extreme northwest corner of the state. This route passes through diverse sections of Texas with contrasting types of vegetation, topographical features, and land use patterns. The eastern segment includes heavily forested areas that have been cleared and used for farming, dairying, and poultry production. As it continues west, it passes through rolling prairies and grasslands where some of the earliest and important oil discoveries in the state ushered in unprecedented growth. The western segment extends through a part of the Great Plains where cattle and wheat production are the cornerstone of the local economy. Although it was not incorporated into the interstate highway system, it has been an important regional highway within the state’s road network for almost a century.

¹⁰¹⁹ “Historic Preston Bend Bridge, Where Settlers Entered Texas, Carrying Travelers Since Row” [sic] in *Dallas News*, July 23, 1931. Texas Roads Scrapbook, Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin.

¹⁰²⁰ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917-1968,” <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/index.html> (last modified November 14, 2011).

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¹⁰²¹ J.H. Colton & Co., *Colton's New Map of the State of Texas*, 1858, From the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 0445a, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=0445a> (accessed January 22, 2013).

¹⁰²² *Texas New Yorker's Railroad Map of Texas*, 1874, Map, From the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 0945, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=0945> (accessed January 22, 2013). Research efforts were unable to locate additional information regarding the "Trans'l Paris" railroad. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Texarkana and Paris indicate that the line was incorporated into the T&P system by 1885.

¹⁰²³ William C. Pool, *A Historical Atlas of Texas*. (Austin: The Encino Press, 1975), pp. 130–139.

¹⁰²⁴ "Paris, Texas Object Lesson Road Report" (1910); Letter to Vernon M. Peirce, January 15, 1912.

¹⁰²⁵ *Railroad and County Map of Texas*, December 1893, Map (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., Inc., 1892 [sic]), From the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 7878, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=1688> (accessed January 3, 2013).

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